339.41 N482l

Columbia University
in the City of New York



Library

AN HISTORICAL ACCOUNT

OF THE

FOUNDING AND WORK

OF THE

LEAKE AND WATTS

ORPHAN HOUSE,

NEW YORK CITY.

BY

THE REV. R. M. HAYDEN.

PRINTED BY AND UNDER THE AUTHORITY OF THE
LEAKE AND WATTS ASSOCIATION.

1909

[illegible]

AN HISTORICAL ACCOUNT

OF THE

FOUNDING AND WORK

OF THE

LEAKE AND WATTS

ORPHAN HOUSE,

NEW YORK CITY.

BY

THE REV. R. M. HAYDEN.

PRINTED BY AND UNDER THE AUTHORITY OF THE
LEAKE AND WATTS ASSOCIATION.

We, the undersigned, ANDREW PECK, JOHN DOOLY, RICH'D M. HAYDEN, THOS. W. KILEY, EDWARD H. JAYNE, WILLIAM H. JONES, of the City, County, and State of New York, all of full age and citizens of the United States, being desirous of forming a body politic and corporate, for benevolent and charitable purposes, under and pursuant to the provisions of an Act entitled, An Act, for the incorporation of Benevolent, Charitable, Scientific and Missionary Societies, passed April 12th, 1848, and the acts amending the same, do hereby associate ourselves together for the purpose of becoming, with our associates and successors, a Society and Body Corporate, and pursuant to the said acts, and for that purpose, do hereby certify and declare:

1st.—This Association shall be called the LEAKE AND WATTS ASSOCIATION, OF NEW YORK CITY.

2d.—That the business and objects of such Society shall be to unite in fraternal fellowship all males who have been inmates of the Leake and Watts Orphan House, New York; revive and preserve old memories of the Institution, encourage and stimulate, by our lives and examples, those who have been, who are, or who may become inmates of the same; also to found a Beneficiary Fund to provide for members in good standing when sickness or death renders the aid of such fund necessary, and also to provide (at our discretion) for the burial of needy persons who have once been inmates of the Leake and Watts Orphan House, whether members or not.

3d.—That the business and objects of said Society shall be managed and conducted by seven managers, and that the names of those who are to manage the same the first year are: ANDREW PECK, JOHN DOOLY, RICHARD M. HAYDEN THOMAS W. KILEY, EDWARD H. JAYNE, WILLIAM H. JONES, JOHN R. GAIT.

Given under our hands in the City of New York,
the 22d day of November, 1886.

ANDREW PECK.
JOHN DOOLY.
RICHARD M. HAYDEN.
THOS. W. KILEY.
EDWARD H. JAYNE.
WILLIAM H. JONES.

Filed in County Clerk's Office, New York City, Dec. 1, 1886.

Filed in Office of Frederick Cook, Secretary of State, Albany, December 2, 1886.

259946

TRUSTEES*

OF THE

LEAKE AND WATTS ORPHAN HOUSE.

I.—MAYORS OF THE CITY OF NEW YORK.

Walter Bowne.....1831–1833	Fernando Wood.....1855 & 1857
Gideon Lee.....1833–1834	Daniel F. Tiemann 1858 & 1859
Cor. W. Lawrence.....1834–1837	Fernando Wood.....1860 & 1861
Aaron Clark.....1837–1839	George Opdyke.....1862 & 1863
Isaac L. Varian.....1839–1841	C. G. Gunther.....1864 & 1865
Robert H. Morris.....1841–1844	John T. Hoffman.....1866–1868
James Harper.....1844–1845	A. Oakey Hall.....1869–1872
W. F. Havemeyer.....1845–1846	W. F. Havemeyer.....1873 & 1874
Andrew H. Mickle.....1846–1847	W. H. Wickham.....1875 & 1876
Wm. V. Brady.....1847–1848	Smith Ely, Jr 1877 & 1878
W. F. Havemeyer.....1848–1849	Edward Cooper.....1879 & 1880
Caleb S. Woodhull 1849–1850	William R. Grace.....1881 & 1882
A. C. Kingsland.....1851 & 1852	Franklin B. Edson 1883 & 1884
J. A. Westervelt.....1853 & 1854	William R. Grace.....1885 & 1886

II.—RECORDERS OF THE CITY OF NEW YORK.

Richard Riker.....1831–1838	Francis R. Tillou.....1852–1855
Robert H. Morris.....1838–1841	James M. Smith, Jr.....1855–1858
Fred. A. Tallmadge.....1841–1846	George G. Barnard.....1858–1861
John B. Scott.....1846–1849	John T. Hoffman.....1861–1865
Fred. A. Tallmadge.....1849–1852	John K. Hackett.....1866–1879

Frederick Smyth, 1880–

III.—RECTORS OF TRINITY CHURCH.

Rev. W. Berrian, D. D....1831–1862 | Rev. Morgan Dix, D. D., D. C. L.1862

*This list was prepared by, and is here printed with the permission of Mr. John M. Knox, Jr , Clerk of the Board.

IV.—WARDENS OF TRINITY CHURCH.

Nehemiah Rogers.....1831–1843
Charles McEvers 1831–1839
Thomas L. Ogden.....1839–1845
Adam Tredwell 1843–1853
Edward W. Laight.....1845–1852
W. E. Dunscomb.....1852–1874
William H. Harison.... ..1853–1856
Robert Hyslop.....1856–1863
Gulian C. Verplanck.....1863–1870
George T. Strong.....1870–1875
Samuel T. Skidmore.....1874–1881
John A. Dix.....1875–1879
John J. Cisco 1879–1884
Gouverneur M. Ogden.....1881–1884
John J Astor.....1884–
Stephen P. Nash.....1884–

V.—SENIOR MINISTERS OF THE COLLEGIATE DUTCH CHURCH.

Rev. G. A. Kuypers.....1831–1836
Rev. John Knox, D. D.....1836–1858
Rev. Thomas De Witt, D.D. 1858–1874
Rev. T. E. Vermilye. D.D.,LL.D.1874

VI.—MINISTERS OF THE FIRST PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH.

Rev. W. W.Phillips, D.D. .1831–1865
Rev. W. M. Paxton, D.D...1865–1883
Rev. Richard D. Harlan, 1886–

PRESIDENTS OF THE BOARD OF TRUSTEES.

The Mayors of the City of New York, ex officio, 1831–1857.

Rev. John Knox, D.D.. .. 1857–1858
Daniel F. Tiemann 1858–1860
George G. Barnard 1860–1861
John T. Hoffman.....1861–1868
G. C. Verplanck.....1868–1870
Rev. T. De Witt, D.D.....1870–1874
Rev. Morgan Dix, D.D., D.C.L., 1874.

CLERKS.

Frederic de Peyster.....1831–1882
John M. Knox, Jr.....1882–

TREASURERS.

James C. Roosevelt.....1837–1840
James H. Roosevelt.....1840–1863
Johm M. Knox, 1863–

SUPERINTENDENTS.

William Rockwell.....1844
Rev. Samuel D. Ferguson..1844–1848
T. C. McKenne.....1848–1850
Rev. James J. Demarest....1850–1852
William Kennedy.....1852–1854
William H. Guest... 1855–1876
Rev. Richard M. Hayden, 1876–

INTRODUCTION.

THE LEAKE AND WATTS ASSOCIATION is a Society of men who were formerly connected with the Leake and Watts Orphan House, New York City. Its object is stated in the Act of Incorporation.

It was organized September 23d, 1884. It owes its existence more particularly to the interest and zeal of Mr. Andrew Peck, the founder of the well-known house of Peck & Snyder, dealers in Sporting Goods; the Rev. John Dooly, for many years past and still, the successful Pastor of the Broome Street Tabernacle, and Mr. Thomas W. Kiley, an extensive wholesale Hardware Merchant of Brooklyn, New York.

These gentlemen associated with themselves others, who, in a noble spirit of gratitude to the home of their childhood are laboring to further its good name and work. While doing what they can to mutually aid and encourage those who have gone forth from its walls, it is at the same time hoped that their influence is not without its good effect upon the children yet within the Home.

The Society holds regular meetings, and also an Annual Fraternal Meeting, when, at the invitation of the Board of

Trustees, all who have at any time been inmates of the Institution are asked to assemble with them at the Home, and enjoy a day of pleasure and reunion. Under these auspices, on Monday, July 5, 1886, the largest number of former children of the Home who have ever at any one time come together, gathered under its roof ; and as a part of the programme for the day listened to the following history of the Institution. The accompanying resolutions explain how it came to be written, as also its present publication in printed form.

At a Regular Meeting of the Leake and Watts Association, held at the Institution, January 12th, 1886, a motion was made by Mr. John R. Gait, and carried, that a speaker be appointed by the chair, to deliver an address on the occasion of the Fraternal Meeting to be held on the 5th day of July, 1886.

The chair appointed the Rev. R. M. Hayden.

At a Regular Meeting of the Leake and Watts Association, held at the Broome Street Tabernacle, New York City, Tuesday, September 14th, 1886, the Rev. John Dooly made the following motion, which was adopted ; That the History of the Leake and Watts Orphan House, written, and delivered by the Rev. R. M. Hayden, at the Fraternal Meeting, be placed in the hands of the Executive Committee, with power to print and have the same ready for distribution at the meeting in January, 1887.

ADDRESS:

In turning over the pages of the Holy Bible few sentiments strike a deeper cord in the human heart, than that contained in the verse of the 27th Psalm of David, which says,

"When my Father and my Mother forsake me, then the Lord will take me up." It contains a sweet promise of hope and assurance from the giver of every blessing to a class, whom in His inscrutable wisdom he has seen fit mysteriously to afflict. To the Orphan, helpless and dependent by being deprived of his natural guardians and protectors, it says in tones of loving sympathy, The Almighty God, The Maker of Heaven and Earth, The Source of all Power and Might, The Creator of man himself—He will be your Father; He will take you under his especial protection; He will be to you throughout the journey of life, amid its ever changing scenes of joy and sorrow, a guardian, guide, and friend, and prove to you in every phase of varied experience, a more sure and ready help than is within the possibility of earthly parent.

It must have been evident to the thoughtful Christian, that God has from time to time since man's creation, made him direct and special promises, suited to his peculiar circum-

stances and surroundings, and as occasion and necessity required, raised up special providential agencies for the satisfactory fulfillment of these promises; and who is there who will say that such is not the case with reference to the history and work of this noble Institution, under whose roof we are gathered to-day, and of whose good name and record we are so justly proud. Who is there, looking back over the field of usefulness of nearly half a century which this Home has occupied, where hundreds of helpless, parentless children, from day to day, and from year to year, have been fed and clothed, instructed mentally and morally, and sent out equipped for the battle of life, who is there, duly considering this work, will claim, that such an agency and power for good came about by chance, was but a fortuitous accident in the unstudied events of men, or possesses no greater evidence of special Providence than the ordinary transactions of daily experience? Should, however, a more direct token of the over-ruling Providence of God, in the founding of this Home be sought, it can, I think, be seen in what we know of the history of the founder himself, and in the remarkable combination of circumstances from which it grew into a living reality. There seems to have been a strange fatality in the series of events leading to its formation, and in these events it appears as if God had transcended human conditions, in order to bring about in the end, his own great and blessed purpose.

It may not be uninteresting, on this occasion, to recount some of the more important facts relating to the history of the

Orphan House, which, while though familiar to some, may not be known to others. What I shall have to say can lay no claim to originality, as all has been said before, and in a better way by others; and the only apology, therefore, I have to offer for attempting the task at all, is, that in my position as the resident officer in charge, I am frequently questioned in reference to the details I shall undertake to present, while the records containing the information were mostly prepared some years ago, and are not readily accessible to those interested in their contents at this time.

For the material used in these pages, I am very largely indebted to the writings of the late Clerk of the Board of Trustees, the Hon. Frederic De Peyster, LL.D., F.R.H.S., as also to those of the present Clerk, Mr. John M. Knox, Jr.

Mr. John George Leake, he whose name appears first in the corporate title of the Orphan House, was a son of Robert Leake, Commissary of Stores for the English in the French and Indian War. But comparatively little is known of the history and antecedents of Commissioner General Leake, either before or after his arrival in this country. He appears under any circumstances, to have been a man of unusual intelligence and activity, and to have owed his promotion in the British Army to the vigorous exercise of these qualities. In his capacity of Commissioner of Stores, he was associated with General Braddock, in 1755, in his memorable expedition, having in view the capture of Fort Duquesne. After that General's disastrous defeat he continued still, till his death, to ex-

ercise the office of Commissioner General of the Colonies of North America. He resided in the City of New York, where he accumulated a large property, and died on the 28th of December, 1773. The public impression of his character, as formed at the time of his death, may be seen in the following notice of his death in the *New York Gazette* and *Weekly Mercury* published in the City of New York, January 3, 1774. "Tuesday morning last died at his seat in the Bowery, in the out-ward of this city, in the 54th year of his age, Robert Leake, Esq., Commissary General of North America. He was long a faithful servant of the Crown, a loving husband, tender parent, one of the best masters, and a friend to all tradesmen. His remains were interred in the family vault in Trinity Churchyard, yesterday, attended by a great concourse of the inhabitants of this place and vicinity."

A solitary citation will serve to show how vain all attempts have been, and will likely be, to trace with any assurance of truth the history of General Leake, prior to his coming to America. In after years, when his son, John George Leake, the founder of this Institution died, a valuable part of his estate escheated to the State owing to a defect in his will. Many parties professing blood relationship came forward and claimed the property. Among the applicants were three sets or families, acknowledging no relationship among themselves, and yet presenting each an individual whom they declared to be Robert Leake, all with characteristics of history and person so remarkable and peculiar in themselves, and yet so entirely

alike to each other, as to render it impossible for the most acute legal talent to discriminate as to the merit of their claims.

A select Committee of the House of the Assembly, of which Charles P. Daly, ex-Chief Justice of the Court of Common Pleas, was chairman, was appointed to report as to these escheated lands of Mr. Leake. The report was made in the Assembly of the State of New York, February 14, 1844, and it thus refers to this apparent strange phenomenon: "It will have been perceived that each class of claimants represent the *Robert Leck*, of whom they speak, to have been a soldier abroad, to have been wounded at Dettingen, and to have had a brother killed in battle, although they differ as to the brother's name. The witnesses produced by each respectively, testify that the person they refer to became a school master in Campsie after his return from the wars; that he was actively engaged during the rebellion in the cause of the king; that he went to England; that he was greatly promoted in the army; and that he subsequently went to America, in an important military capacity, and never returned. Witnesses produced in behalf of different classes of claimants, agree in stating that they never heard of any other person of the same name, who kept a school at Campsie or its vicinity, and they each distinguish him by the appellation of the 'Fine English Teacher.' The three families, if the respective witnesses are to be credited, retained as a matter of family history, for nearly a century, the belief that the Commissary was their relative, and it is distinctly stated by the witnesses, that when settled in

America, he sent letters to each of these families. To reconcile such a state of facts with the personal history of the Commissary would be an attempt as fruitless as it would be ridiculous."

The mother of John George Leake, Margaretta Leake, died in England, and was buried at Bedlington, Northumberland County, in the North of England, prior to his father's coming to this country. Commissioner General Robert Leake was married a second time after arriving here, to Ann Burrege, of New York City, who survived him ten years.

John George was one of four children. A brother, James Edward, died in infancy in 1753, in England, followed in the next year by an only sister, who was married, but childless. His remaining brother, Major Robert Wm. Leake, who married a sister of Mr. John Watts, died in this country, leaving an only son, who also died at the age of eight years. This son, it is understood, would have become the heir of his uncle John George Leake, on which account his death was much lamented by him. General Robert Leake had no children by his second marriage, and hence, so far as could be known, John George was the only surviving member of his family at the time of his father's death. Mr. Leake inherited a large estate from his father, and came eventually, also, into the possession of a part of the property of his mother-in-law, with whom he continued to reside in the most pleasant relations till her death.

Having an ample income and sufficient occupation in

the care and preservation of his property, Mr. Leake's life seems to have been devoid of those changes and more stirring incidents which make up a history. He appears to have been of a remarkably retiring disposition, limiting his acquaintance and companionship to a small and select number, and, later on in life, spending the most of his time in comparative seclusion. For one person, however, he entertained a more than usual friendship and affection. It was Mr. John Watts, his brother-in-law, with whom he had been a student at law in the office of the noted Judge Duane, and whose name is joined with his own in the founding of the Orphan House. They resided at the time of their death not a great way from each other, in what is now known as the lower part of the city, and were nearly of the same age.

Mr. Leake's *inner* as well as outer life, would appear to have been one of solitary loneliness, arising, very likely, from the conviction expressed with sadness by himself, "I have no blood heirs; I am the last of my race; there are none living in whose veins runs a drop of my blood:" These convictions, too, being the result of a visit to England and Scotland, after his nephew's death, in 1793, with the express view of ascertaining if there were any living who could prove consanguinity with him.

It is not difficult, I think, from this aspect of his thought and feeling, to trace that disposition of his property, which would soothe his own sense of loneliness, or comfort and cheer the loneliness of others, none the less lonely, if so rendered

by the more direct and visible hand of God; hence sprang that wish to create the right, as far as the laws of man could, to link his own name to future posterity; or failing in this, to show his interest in a class of humanity for whom his own experience in life might engender a tender sympathy. With these thoughts in mind we may the better be prepared to examine the contents of his will by which, eventually, the Orphan House was founded.

Mr. Leake died in the City of New York, June 2, 1827. Upon his decease, after some searching, his Will was found. It was drawn up by himself, he having been a lawyer. A comparatively small part of his property being disposed of otherwise, he makes two propositions with reference to the disposal of the great bulk, the second to hold in case of default in the first. He creates Robert, the third son of his intimate friend John Watts, sole heir upon condition of himself and heirs taking and bearing the name of Leake. In case of his failure to do this, or his dying before the age of twenty-one years, the will provides that the property shall be vested in a specially designated Board of Trustees for the maintenance and education of helpless orphan children, paying no attention whatsoever to the nationality or religious persuasion of the parents.

This will was defective in one important regard, which entailed much trouble and expense upon those directly interested at the time of Mr. Leake's death, and which from that day to this has been the subject of ever recuring strife and

litigation. Although drawn up with great care and deliberation, without an erasure, and in the handwriting of the testator himself, with his name in full at the commencement, beginning with the words, "In the name of God, Amen. I, John G. Leake, of the City of New York," etc., it was not duly signed or attested at the close. Consequent upon this defect the will was long and strongly contested in the courts, it being held by some that Mr. Leake died intestate; but in December, 1829, was adjudged valid so far as it related to the personal estate, but inoperative as to his real estate, which escheated to the State. Mr. Watts, Sr., being himself a man of wealth, was averse to his son's changing his family name, and did what he could to dissuade him from it. Robert, however, entertained the proposition favorably, but with as much silence as possible out of regard to the feelings of his father. In due course of time, an application was prepared to be presented to the Legislature, for the passage of an act, authorizing him to assume the name of Leake; but it was ordered in the working of a Divine Providence that the end thus sought should not be attained. Before the presentation could be made, and just about the time of the decision rendered as to the validity of the will, the applicant was taken sick and never recovered. He had been engaged in a game of baseball, after which a thoughtless exposure resulted in a sudden check of perspiration, leading first to a cold and cough, and then to fever. Although of robust constitution and lightly regarding the matter in the beginning, the patient was unable to rally from the effects of the disease, which after a few weeks assumed alarm-

ing aspects, and he expired at the very moment when the key to the possession of large wealth lay within his grasp. He died, therefore, without having formally accepted or refused to comply with the terms of the will. As a matter of law his father inherited whatever rights belonged to the son.

It is here that we have a chance to take a glimpse of the character of John Watts, he whose name stands second in the title of the Orphan House. All of us are familiar with the elegant oil painting above the mantel-piece, and the fine marble bust which adorn our parlor. They are likenesses of this gentleman. The stately presence, the lofty forehead, the benevolent expression of face and mouth, are indices of the man himself. Dignity of character, wide and comprehensive intelligence and sensibility, and a generous appreciation of, and interest in, the happiness of his fellow-man—these all may be seen in the part he took in reference to Mr. Leake's will consequent upon the death of his son, and entitle him to the place he holds in the corporate name of the institution, as well as to the lasting gratitude of all who shall have shared the blessings of this Home. Mr. Watts was cognizant of the mind and purpose of Mr. Leake in the disposition of his property, and knowing that in the death of his son the possibilities of the first provision of the will, which from the beginning he had opposed, were forever extinguished, with a magnanimity rarely equalled and never excelled, he immediately took such steps as would leave the proper parties free to carry out the second provision of the will, which was in itself the direct founding and organization of this

Home whose benefits we enjoy to-day. Application was made to the Legislature, and on the 7th of March, 1831, an Act was passed for the incorporation of "The Leake and Watts Orphan House, in the city of New York." Mr. Watts was one of the executors of the will of Mr. Leake, himself and Herman Leroy the only ones surviving at this time; and on the 22d day of March, 1831, fifteen days after the passage of the Act of Incorporation, they duly transferred in legal form to the trustees named in the will from the estate of Mr. Leake, that property which created the foundation, and which has since been the support of the Orphan House.

These Trustees, seven in number, were an ex-officio board, and were occupants of prominent offices and positions in the City of New York. At this time it was composed as follows:

Walter Bowne, Mayor of the City of New York.

Richard Riker, Recorder of the City of New York.

Rev. William Berrian, D.D., Rector of Trinity Church, New York City.

Nehemiah Rogers,
Charles McEvers, } Church Wardens of Trinity Church.

Rev. Gerardus A. Kuypers, eldest minister of the Dutch Congregation, New York City.

Rev. William W. Phillips, eldest minister of the Presbyterian Congregation, New York City.

The Trustees were limited in their steps taken towards

the erection, and active operation of the Orphan House, to the profits of the estate, they being forbidden by the terms of the will to ever use the principal for any purpose other than as a source of income. Under these restricted conditions, therefore, the funds were allowed to accumulate, and it was not until seven years after the passage of the act of incorporation that the fruits of their labors took visible form.

The magnificent piece of land in Bloomingdale, comprising about 25 acres, then undivided by street or avenue, and unsurpassed on Manhattan Island for healthiness and beauty of location, had been purchased; and on Saturday, the 28th day of April, 1838, the corner stone of the present building was laid. It was an imposing occasion, and was participated in by some of the first and representative people of the day. There were present Aaron Clark, Mayor of New York City; Rev. Dr. Berrian, of Trinity Church; Rev. Dr. Knox, of the Dutch Church; Rev. Dr. Phillips, of the Presbyterian Church, besides a large assemblage of distinguished persons of varied professions. The exercises were as follows: Opening prayer by Dr. Berrian, an address by Dr. Knox, a second address by the Mayor of the City, followed by the laying of the corner stone by the same person, and the concluding prayer by Dr. Phillips. Both of the addresses were most beautiful and impressive, and are an evidence of the very great interest with which this work was then regarded by the general community.

Dr. Knox in part said: "There is something peculiarly

grateful to the benevolent heart in the enterprise which now claims our attention. It affords a beautiful and blessed illustration of the beneficence of our holy religion. Among the renowned heathen of antiquity were found the enduring monuments of power and pride and oppression, of selfishness and of ambition; but of mercy to the miserable, not one. While in lands truly christian, efforts, individual and combined, in every form, are employed to prevent, to mitigate, and to remove human wretchedness. Every humane and generous feeling of our nature is wakened into action; and upon many a soul the blessing of those who were ready to perish descends in its most grateful fragrance. We are about to lay the corner-stone of an edifice to be reared, not for the punishment of crime, not for the amusement of the gay, nor for any of the purposes of traffic. It is destined to a nobler use. The edifice is to be the home of the helpless, outcast, perishing *orphan—a temple of humanity*—a monument of *mercy*. Who can estimate the results of this endowment upon the temporal and eternal destiny of the orphans who shall hereafter be admitted within these walls? What miseries may it not be expected to alleviate and remove, in soothing the pangs of the dying parent, and in rescuing the poor, defenceless, perishing child from death, ignorance and vice, and training him to usefulness, and honor, and virtue? May the kind providence of God watch over this enterprise, guard from harm and danger all employed in the erection of the building, and bring it to a successful completion. Here may many a poor orphan find protection and sup-

port, and be trained to intelligence and industry, to piety, usefulness and happiness.

In speaking of the Founders, the Mayor said: "Pursuant to arrangement, I am about to lay the corner stone of the Leake and Watts Orphan House. We are assembled upon this sacred eminence to add one more to the constellation of charities that are the pride and honor of our city. This City, this State, this Continent will most cheerfully do them honor. They may well be called benefactors of their country. While time shall last they will live in the hearts of a grateful people. When they were with us they did not forget the *poorest of the poor*, and now they are gone, their names and their deeds shall be the joyful theme of thousands and tens of thousands. We have among us this day several worthy kinsmen of the men of whom we speak. Let them witness the warm and sincere gratitude with which we acknowledge the kindness of their departed friends. Let the intrepid warrior, the active citizen, and the wisest statesman approach, and behold this sublimest spectacle—The Rescue of 'the innocents.' Let them see two virtuous, unambitious and unpretending citizens, seeking out the 'helpless orphan children,' taking them in their arms, raising them toward Him who is 'mighty to save,' and imploring for them every blessing of earth and of heaven; then observe destitute but unconscious childhood, reflecting back the ineffable approbation by its smiles, its love, its confidence and happiness."

On Friday, November 1, 1843, the Orphan House was

completed, and opened for the reception of children. At this date, the Board of Trustees and officers comprised the following persons, as found upon the familiar marble slab above the entrance :

Rev. William Berrian, D. D., Rector of Trinity Church.

Thomas L. Ogden, Esq., } Wardens of Trinity Church.
Adam Treadwell, Esq., }

Rev. John Knox, D. D., Senior Minister of the Reformed Protestant Dutch Church.

Rev. William W. Phillips, D. D., Senior Minister of the Presbyterian Church.

Hon. Robert H. Morris, Mayor of the City of New York.

Hon. Frederick A. Tallmadge, Recorder of the City of New York.

James H. Roosevelt, Esq., Treasurer.

Frederic De Peyster, Esq., Clerk.

William Rockwell, M. D., Superintendent and Physician.

This charming and extensive site, and this grand old home, with its massive foundations and walls, and high roomy apartments, are a monument to the wisdom, fidelity and generous spirit of those who in that day had this work in hand, and form a noble illustration of the prophet's words, that "The liberal deviseth liberal things." What was then proposed and put into effect, and has since been carried out, indicated that those holding this sacred trust intended that it should be conducted upon a large and comprehensive basis,

worthy of the high positions held by the trustees themselves, and worthy of the great city of which it is an ornament.

For nearly forty-three years now, this House has been quietly, faithfully and effectually doing its allotted work, maintaining and educating helpless, orphan children. It has been a governing principle with the Trustees to regard the *quality* of the work, rather than the *quantity;* to give, with the means at their command, a limited number of children the best possible support, morally and physically suited to their condition, rather than to provide for a larger number in an inferior way; hence mere figures but feebly express what good has been done, what mighty influences have been exerted in the years of the past.

Children are admitted not under three years of age nor over twelve, and all are required to remain in the institution until fourteen years old. To be admitted, a physician's certificate is required, stating that the child is healthy mentally and physically, and an agreement has also to be signed by the relatives or friends, promising to respect and abide by such rules as shall be made by the Trustees for the proper government of the children. These are the only and simple conditions of entrance here. Discharge of children from the Orphan House is effected in either of two ways: First, by Surrender to such relatives or friends as are able to do so, and who henceforth assume the care and oversight of them, or second, by Indenture for a period not less than three or more than five years, in homes, where they may learn useful and

necessary lessons in household duties, or other proper employments; receive kind and considerate treatment, and thus be enabled at the expiration of their term of service to start out, reasonably prepared and equipped in body and mind, for the responsibilities of life.

The rules as to the ages of admission and dismission make it possible for a child to remain in the institution any where from two to eleven years, and hence, to many, it is the only known or remembered home of their childhood, while to a very large number of others, it is associated with the best years of their early life. The age named by the Trustees for leaving the House is intentional and significant. The children are not taken and kept for the purpose merely of tiding over a quarter or half year of adverse fortune in a family. They are orphans,—helpless and dependent. They enter the institution because they have no resources of support elsewhere, they will have none in the future, except for what they are fitted here; and it is believed by the Trustees that under ordinary circumstances, with such training of the mind and heart as the instruction here furnishes, and such development of the body as the food and raiment and hygienic surroundings afford, they will at that time have so sufficiently advanced, mentally and physically, as to be capable, rightly using their acquirements, to begin life for themselves with a fair prospect of self-support. Under this broad and liberal arrangement, 1,374 children, 942 males and 432 females, have found shelter and protection beneath this roof since the time of opening, to the present date.

The good men who have been interested in the building up and management of this Home, have reason to rejoice in their work, in the lives of those who have gone forth from these walls. Carrying with them the instruction and development received here as children, they have entered every department of life, and reflected in their actions the benificent effect of their early training. The farmer, the mechanic, the artisan of high and low degree, the mariner, the merchant, and the professions of law, medicine, and theology, have all had their ranks swelled by those who once sat at these seats; and these laborers in the various departments of life's industries, scattered throughout the length and breadth of the land (I may more correctly say over the globe), have done, and are doing their work nobly and well. There are men to-day within an hour or two's journey of these grounds, occupying the highest positions of trust and power in the activities of this great metropolis, whose callings, and the efficiency with which they fill them, would do credit to the noblest born and reared, who owe their success to this Home, where they spent their early years. And all honor to these men,—men of wealth, men of education, honest men and women of many spheres in life, who are not ashamed of the home of their childhood, and who come back, as time and opportunity offer, to lay upon its altar a tribute of their gratitude and affection.

It is said, upon scientific grounds, that even a pebble falling moves the earth; dropping into the water produces a series of waves or motions which cease not till they have

reached the most distant shore. So, only in an infinitely greater degree, the effect of the influence of this Home upon those who have lived here, and onward through them upon those associated with them. Who can tell to what low depths they might have fallen if this Home had not taken them by the hand? What ever widening and increasing powers for good have been produced by lifting them up, kindling in their hearts a love of God and man, and sending them on their way equipped for the journey of life. Well might the Rev. Dr. Knox, in the address referred to on the occasion of the laying of the corner stone, speaking to his co-laborers of the Board of Trustees, say: "Has it not occurred to you, my respected associates in this trust, that in yielding our agency in its execution, we are honored with being the ministering ones of *the Father of Mercies Himself*,—of Him who, in a form as sublime as it is full of touching pathos, declares, 'the Father of the fatherless is God in His holy habitation'"?

The House has reason to be proud of, and rejoice in the record of its beneficiaries of the past; may those who come after not do less to sustain its good name.

There was deep wisdom and foresight in the judgment of Mr. Leake in naming those who should act as Trustees of this institution; there is singular correspondence between the Catholic foundation upon which it was established, and the representative character of those who should manage its affairs. It will have been noticed that not individual persons, but persons occupying certain important positions, civil and ecclesias-

tical, were designated as always the holders of this trust. Thus the following gentlemen, whoever, at any time, they may be, are in virtue of their office the governing staff: The Mayor and Recorder of the City of New York, the Rector and Church Wardens of Trinity Church, and the senior ministers of the Dutch and Presbyterian Congregations of the City of New York. This Board elects its own presiding and other officers, and has immediate and direct control of everything relating to the management of the Orphan House. It will be seen that in one direction or another the voice of the entire community is exercised in the election of these gentlemen to office, and hence in the joint product of their counsels for the safety and welfare of this asylum, we are prepared for that generous breadth of sentiment, that large unstinted provision for its wards, and that ever ready adaption in lesser matters to proper reasonable popular impulse and feeling, which have characterized the administration of its affairs from the first, and have given it a place in the fore-front among similar agencies for good. To the lofty character of these gentlemen, to their wide and matured wisdom and experience in the varied walks of life, and their untiring Christian love for, and interest in the happiness of those committed to their trust, must be attributed, under God, this blessed result.

When we consider what the offices are which these gentlemen hold, how full of care and responsibility, how valuable their time is for pressing duties, and then consider what they have done and are doing for this Home, for no other reward

than the pleasure they take in serving their fellow man, there is due to them on the part of all those who have shared its benefits a debt of deep and lasting gratitude. . . . And may I not add, my friends, that such is not wanting? The boys and girls of this Home of past and present years do sincerely appreciate the labors of these their benefactors; do look up to them with feelings of respect and veneration, and will always continue to "esteem them very highly in love for their works sake."

The Board of Trustees and Officers, as composed at this date, comprise the following well known and honored persons:

Rev. Morgan Dix, D. D., D. C. L. President.
Rev. Thomas E. Vermilye, D. D., LL. D..
Rev. Richard D. Harlan.
Mayor, William R. Grace.
Recorder, Frederick Smyth.
Mr. John J. Astor.
Mr. Stephen P. Nash.
Mr. John M. Knox, Treasurer.
Mr. John M. Knox, Jr., Clerk.

A subject remains to be referred to here, without which this account of the institution, as I have intended to give it, would be incomplete. It forms the one only shadow which has fallen upon its fair fortune. Beginning with its inception it continues to this day. We have told the story of the providential way in which this Asylum sprang into existence.

We have seen from the will of its founder, how broad and Catholic is its policy, passing over forms of religion and distinctions of color and race, bounding the applicant only by the limitations of orphanage and helplessness, thus making it the heritage of the whole community.

We have seen how wisely they builded who first planned out its method of government and daily life. We have seen too, the great and noble work it has done, and done so well as to elicit the favorable judgment of the public. Hosts of sons and daughters, all over the land, have risen up to bless it, and to thank God for its instrumentality in preserving their lives, and securing their present and eternal interests. What thousands of money it has saved the State, in feeding the hungry and clothing the naked! What incalculable benefit it has conferred upon it, by turning into useful, upright, intelligent citizens, those who, otherwise left to poverty and consequent vice, might have been led to deeds of darkness and lives of crime! I do not think I have overstated the merits of this Home.

In the light of these things, is it not strange that the great State of New York should deliberately withhold from the Orphan House a much needed property, and means of support, which, without a word of doubt, was intended for, and given to it by its founder? And yet such is the fact,—a fact unaccountable upon any grounds of Christian justice or right. We remember that Mr. Leake wrote his own will, using his name solemnly in the beginning, but failed to sign or have it attested

at the close: that, owing to this defect, it was contested, and that finally the decision was rendered that it was a valid will as to the personal property, but inoperative as regarded the real estate, and that in default of the appearance of accepted family claimants, this real estate passed into the possession of the State, where it has since been sold and the proceeds appropriated to the general school fund. We have, in the course of the account, noticed that Mr. Leake died with the conviction that none lived who could prove consanguinity with him, and although from that time to this there have those arisen who presented themselves as the natural heirs to this escheated property, yet, after the most fair, thorough, and searching investigations, at various times, it has been conclusively demonstrated that no one has yet come forward who could show his or her right to the estate in question. Now one thing is very plain in reading Mr. Leake's will; and that is, that he entertained the same thought and intention in regard to the *ultimate object* of his real estate that he did as to his personal property. It is evident that the same wish is cherished and expressed in the same language, as to the purpose to which each and both should be applied; and it seems therefore indeed a small thing, on the part of this great and rich commonwealth, that it should take advantage of a mere technicality in the drafting of this will of a philanthropic citizen, to divert to a foreign object his gift to so righteous and sacred a cause. The Trustees have many times, most powerfully, and forcibly presented this matter to the Legislature, and begged that the money be released to them for the object for which it without

question was intended. Only within the past year it has most ably and urgently been brought before it through the Clerk of the Board, Mr. John M. Knox, Jr., and Mr. Robert A. Livingston, member of Assembly from Putnam County, N. Y. On one or another occasion, each of the Houses of the Legislature,—the Senate and the Assembly,—have acknowledged the justice and eminent propriety of surrendering the property to the institution, and at no time has either House condemned the claim as extravagant or unwarranted. It is said that this is the only instance in the history of the State, where escheated lands have not been given up to some claimant. As before remarked, claimants in this case have from the first been coming forward, and as often, after impartial treatment, have their claims proved to be unfounded. As was well noted by Mr. Knox in his presentation of the matter, this money will continue to be, from this cause, a source of annoyance to the State, as long as it remains in its Treasury, and by giving it to the Orphan House, the manifest intention of Mr. Leake will be carried out, and the question forever set at rest. It could scarcely be set apart to a better object, if it were entirely in the nature of a gift. It would meet a much needed want at this time, while from a large reduction in the rate of interest, and a heavy outgo for assessments, the institution is financially unable to receive and care for as many children as its facilities would otherwise admit. Its working force and machinery have, with but little modification, to be maintained, under any circumstances; and its number of inmates might therefore be doubled with but comparatively small additional expense.

Applications of a most pressing character are now constantly being made, and have to be denied from lack of sufficient funds to provide for a larger family.

It is earnestly hoped, therefore, that those having the escheated property of Mr. Leake in control, will yet come to see their duty towards this Home, in what we are constrained to call, its true light; that they will realize that in favoring it, they are blessing the community at large; that in keeping back from the orphan this source of support, they are doing injustice to a class, for whom, as the legislators of the State and for the people, they should take highest thought and consideration.*

* This account of the work and needs of a useful Charity is placed before the public, not without the hope that its claims may be brought to the favorable attention of a generous and philanthropic Community. There are those whom God has favored with an abundance of this world's goods, who in a spirit of christian liberality, are looking about for worthy channels through which they can share their blessings with others less fortunate than themselves.

Every now and then, one passes away, who having not been unmindful of the poor while with us, devise that their good works shall live after them, and so provide in their wills that portions of their estate shall go towards the support and maintenance of worthy causes. May we not trust that this Home will not be forgotten by such? That God will put it into their hearts to make us sharers of their bounty?

The nature of the work, the care and education of destitute helpless orphans without regard to creed or nationality, is evidence sufficient of the worthiness of its claims; the high position and character of the gentlemen of the Board of Trustees is ample assurance that any gift so bestowed will be wisely used in the accomplishment of the end desired.

It cannot have failed to have been seen, that in the extraordinary combination of circumstances and events which have conduced to the existence of the Orphan House, as we have reviewed them, there has been the presence of a Divine hand; that the Orphan's God has operated in the heart of man, and overruled human conditions in the fulfillment of his promise, that when father and mother forsake us the Lord will take us up. I say this must have been seen in the history of the early founding of the House; but there is still another sure and abiding evidence of God's Fatherly care and watchful providence in the execution of this promise, which has been apparent from day to day, from month to month, and from year to year.

The freedom of this Home, during all these forty-three years, from anything of the nature of a calamity, is something remarkable. Fire in its destructive course has never harmed us; sickness and disease in every extended and aggravated form has been kept from us, and death, only now and then, at distant intervals, has entered our doors. No accustomed hour or occasion has found those living here wanting for proper food and rainment; while blessings and mercies, temporal and spiritual, have all along been strewn in the way. No startling or untoward circumstance has marred the daily course of events here, and all in the main have gone on in the quiet even pathway of duty, grateful for the tokens of goodness received, solicitous of showing their gratitude in lives of usefulness and devotion.

May we be deeply impressed with these incessant marks of God's love and favor for his helpless children. May we remember that every good and perfect gift comes down from God upon the children of men. Man may be the instrument, may be the means employed in the working out of the Divine will, but God alone is the GREAT FIRST CAUSE: The Centre and Source of every earthly good which we now enjoy; the Fountain of every perfect hope and aspiration which may be realized in the Great Hereafter.



C6874002
339.41
N4821 C1
LEAKE AND WATTS
ARREX

06874002